



JERRY PETROWSKI

WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Senator Jerry Petrowski

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(608) 266-2502

Foster Care Bills Signed into Law

Wausau, WI... Today, two bills authored by Senator Jerry Petrowski (*R- Marathon*) were signed into law by Governor Scott Walker at the Children's Hospital in Wausau. Both bills, Assembly Bill 785 and Assembly Bill 780, were a product of the Speaker's Task Force on Foster Care.

"To understand the foster care system, one has to listen to the foster child and foster parents, but also the biological parents, the caseworkers, teachers, judges, and all the advocates along the way," said Senator Petrowski. "That is why the bills being signed today include preventative and administrative measures to ensure every aspect is considered and no child falls through the cracks."

Assembly Bill 785, co-authored by Representative Pat Snyder (*R- Schofield*), addresses the need for preventive services in the form of a grant program. This bill looks to help children and families before the point of abuse and neglect, by distributing \$500,000 of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to counties, nonprofit organizations, or tribes to fund child abuse and neglect prevention programs.

Assembly Bill 780, co-authored by Representative Jessie Rodriguez (*R- Oak Creek*), provides a number of solutions to problems the Task Force heard from school administrators across the state. The bill requires a child's school to be notified of an upcoming permanency hearing to allow teachers and social workers the opportunity to submit valuable testimony regarding the student's behavior during school hours. In addition, Assembly Bill 780 updates antiquated language to ensure important information regarding foster students can be relayed to the schools in a timely manner.

Both bills passed in the Senate and Assembly with unanimous support. These are two of eleven foster care bills being signed into law today.

Last summer, Speaker Robin Vos created a bipartisan task force to study and address the issues facing children and families in Wisconsin's foster care system. The task force is chaired by Representative Pat Snyder (*R- Schofield*) and Representative Steve Doyle (*D-Onalaska*).

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29TH SENATE DISTRICT

STATE CAPITOL: P.O. BOX 7882 ■ MADISON, WISCONSIN 53707-7882
SEN.PETROWSKI@LEGIS.WISCONSIN.GOV ■ TELEPHONE: (608) 266-2502 ■ FAX: (608) 282-3569